

I believe that it is extremely important that we continue our diplomatic efforts to gain international support for action. Saddam Hussein has blatantly violated 16 important UN Resolutions as he has continued the arms buildup he pledged to curtail. With the growing threat of those weapons, with the assistance Iraq is providing to terrorist groups—including al Qaeda—and with the compelling need to assert the authority of the international community, President Bush has appropriately urged the UN to enforce the sanctions that its members have approved over the last 11 years. I believe H.J. Res. 114—by showing Congress's strong support for the President's position on the issue—will substantially strengthen our effort to develop a consensus at the United Nations for a new and stronger resolution demanding the verifiable removal of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

I believe that it is important, in the language of our Joint Resolution in Congress, to emphasize that we are determined in this cause: that if these efforts to build an international coalition within the United Nations are not successful, we believe that the United States must still take action, joined by the British and other nations who support us already, to ensure that Iraq is never able to use the weapons of mass destruction it has and those it is actively developing. In my judgment, the possibility of Saddam Hussein using these weapons against U.S. targets or our allies in the region justifies the commitment of American military forces, however much I truly hope that diplomatic efforts can succeed and that war can be avoided.

Mr. Speaker, for our own safety and national security, I believe that we should support the position that the President expressed at the United Nations last month. It is time for action. We can no longer ignore the reality of what Saddam Hussein is doing and we should no longer postpone our response to the growing dangers of this weapons programs. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.J. Res. 114.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein has repeatedly demonstrated he is a threat to peaceful nations around the world. He has the money to finance his hostile intentions, he has the capabilities to blackmail nations with the use of weapons of mass destruction, and has shown a willingness to use them.

Everyday our pilots in the northern and southern no-fly zones of Iraq are the targets of Iraqi fire. Perhaps even more frightening, Saddam Hussein continues to develop and stockpile weapons of mass destruction and actively support international terrorism—both in violation of bona fide international agreements. In fact, in all of his actions, Hussein has demonstrated a persistent refusal to comply with every U.N. Security Council resolution in force regarding his country.

U.N. Resolutions called for Saddam to end both his WMD programs and his support for terrorism. Yet, before Hussein kicked them out of Iraq in 1998, weapons inspection teams could testify to the large amount of research, development, and materials associated with nuclear, biological and chemical weapons—despite Iraq's success in concealing the extent of its capabilities. However, Hussein did manage to hide a great deal from these inspectors, and it was not until defectors shared crucial information about hidden stockpiles that Saddam programs were set back, but never completely shut down. Now some people say

we should have new inspections and do nothing else, believing this time that inspectors will be able to do what they could not before—identify and dismantle Iraq's WMD capabilities. Sadly, recent history teaches us otherwise.

The same can be said about Iraq's involvement with terrorism. Hussein continues to maintain his ties with terrorist organizations. Today his terrorist training camps continue to breed more people intent on harming prosperous, free, and democratic nations around the world—and endangering innocent civilians in the process.

Hussein also targets innocent civilians in his own country in violation of U.N. Security Resolutions. For example, the U.N. oil-for-food program allows Iraq to sell enough oil to provide its citizens sufficient food and medicine to sustain a decent standard of living. However, the profits from the oil never make it to the Iraqi people; instead Saddam funnels this money into his weapons programs. He then bolsters his programs with illegal proceeds from smuggled oil.

In light of these actions, it is clear that the world has a problem with Saddam and the international community agrees. Yet instead of action, many people want to limit the United States to building broad coalitions and placing international pressure on Saddam. Unfortunately, history—and the past ten years—has shown us that no amount of international pressure can stop a dictator with such disregard for international agreements and no diplomatic coalition can change his contempt for human life.

For decades Saddam Hussein has brutally trampled on freedom and muzzled the self-expression of his people. He has threatened his neighbors, supported terrorists, and stockpiled weapons of mass destruction. We cannot remove ourselves from the struggle between freedom and tyranny—good and evil. Saddam Hussein is already engaged in a battle, and he has been firing shots for the past decade. Doing nothing is not an option.

With this resolution, Congress acknowledges that something must be done and expresses full support for the President. President Bush's speech on Monday demonstrated that he—like the rest of us—does not want to go to war. And the fact that President Bush waited almost a month before using force in Afghanistan makes obvious his desire to build coalitions and utilize every peaceful opportunity to end international disagreement before resorting to war.

However, he also understands the United States carries an incredible burden of leadership in the world. For this reason when he took office, President Bush assembled one of the finest national security teams this nation has ever seen. They have proven their leadership in previous military conflicts and understand the cost of military action. Their role in the war on terrorism has also demonstrated how much they care about U.S. troops and the loss of life for anyone involved—both military and civilian. Now is the time to have faith in the President's proven leadership and allow him and his advisors to implement the strategy that finally ends the threat Saddam poses to the free world.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of House Joint Resolution 114, authorizing the President to employ the use of our Armed Forces against Iraq, and urge its adoption by this Chamber.

For the past 2 days, the House of Representatives has had under consideration one of the most serious resolutions it is capable of adopting and, like my colleagues, I take it very seriously. Some have argued that this resolution is not necessary, that Iraq poses no immediate danger to the United States or any other nation, and that we should not employ military force against a sadistic terrorist regime that displays not the slightest regard for human life. Mr. Speaker, I disagree.

For the past 10 years, Saddam Hussein has developed and stockpiled chemical and biological weapons and continued to construct facilities capable of producing nuclear weapons. Evidence of this and other destructive activities on the part of Saddam Hussein is overwhelming. Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our Nation's safety and that of our neighbors and allies we cannot ignore this problem any longer. Either Saddam Hussein gives the U.N. weapons inspectors full, un-fettered, and unconditional access to all Iraqi facilities or the United States will take action to disarm him.

I applaud President Bush, who has prudently and methodically made a strong case for why the United States has the moral and political authority to take action against Iraq, if necessary. Mr. Speaker, we are at the end of the line and words and international declarations will no longer do against a dictator who has nothing but contempt for the freedom-loving world and his own people.

In addition to its stockpile of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein has repeatedly violated the Persian Gulf War ceasefire agreement, snubbed numerous U.N. resolutions, brutalized and killed his own people, plotted to assassinate a former U.S. President, and has aided and harbored members of terrorists cells, including al-Qaida. Clearly, we must act.

Mr. Speaker, the foremost responsibility of government is to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. We demand safety and security in our neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces; we should expect the same in the international community as well. Although I remain hopeful that this conflict with Iraq can be resolved peacefully, I am prepared, for the sake of our Nation's security, to employ force. This resolution is not, as some have stated, a "blank check" for the President. Congress has and will continue to maintain its constitutional prerogatives if armed conflict with Iraq should ensue, but as a nation, we have the right to take action. Thus, I urge the adoption of House Joint Resolution 114.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, today, we are debating the most fundamental issues we face as a Congress and as a country. Today we are debating whether to send America's sons and daughters into harm's way, whether a threat exists to America's security and whether we need to act now or wait. We have no more grave responsibility as legislators than defending our Nation and democratic way of life.

American foreign policy has had a single objective since the foundation of our republic. That objective has been to defend our independence and freedoms. Over the years the policies America has followed have changed to meet the changing threat.

During America's first century we followed a policy of staying out of foreign conflicts, comfortable in the security offered by two oceans.